

PH4.3 KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL RENTAL HOUSING

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents information from the OECD Questionnaire on Social and Affordable Housing on the characteristics of social rental housing programmes across OECD countries, and provides details on the different methods used to define rents as well as eligibility of beneficiaries and dwellings allocation. For the purpose of this indicator, the following working definition of social rental housing was used: *Residential rental accommodation provided at sub-market prices and allocated according to specific rules* (Salvi del Pero, A. et al., 2016). Based on this definition, surveyed countries provided information on a range of different supply-side measures in the rental sector, summarized in table 4.3.a below.

Key findings

Not all reporting countries have social rental housing. Chile and Mexico for instance tend to favour affordable housing solutions offering low cost home ownership. By contrast, Sweden has a significant rental sector but, strictly speaking, no social rental housing as rents in municipal housing are in line with those in the private rental sector (see indicator PH 4.1 and PH 4.2 for further relevant details on social rental housing).

Altogether 29 countries (out of 35) were found to provide at least some form of social rental housing. Most of these countries actually report having more than one type of rental housing which responds to administrative procedures as opposed to market mechanisms, with different characteristics in terms of providers, target groups and financing arrangements. This is partly due to the fact that the history of social housing in many countries goes back to the 19th century and has seen different phases and different stakeholders involved over time, resulting in a sometimes complex mix of policies today.¹ 9 countries reported having only one type of social rental housing arrangement. Most Central and Eastern European countries have experienced a massive housing privatisation since 1990, whereby public authorities were left with a minimal housing stock, constituting the only form of social housing presently available. This is the case in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and the Slovak Republic. Social rental housing also corresponds to publicly provided rental housing in Japan and Korea. By contrast, in Denmark and the Netherlands social rental housing refers only to the not-for-profit sector.

¹ In general, social housing was originally created by company owners or philanthropists as a response to inadequate housing conditions of the poor working class linked with rapid urbanisation and industrialization. Public initiatives typically took over in the post-WWII period and led to large scale construction of social housing for a wide share of the population. The 1980s and 1990s saw a withdrawal of public stakeholders from housing provision and in many countries a process of devolution of competences to lower levels of government in this area. At the same time many countries started to encourage the creation of a not for profit sector to provide social rental housing side-by-side to (or instead of) public authorities. Finally, some countries have opted for an increased involvement of for profit providers/developers in the provision of social housing in exchange for tax credits or favourable loans conditions (as in Germany and the United States) or planning permission (the United Kingdom). Individual landlords are also increasingly involved, typically through direct agreements with the municipality or through associations acting as intermediaries (such as *Agences Immobilières Sociales* in Luxembourg).

Table 4.3.1: Social rental housing: definitions and overview¹

	Year	Definition	Summary overview
Australia	2015	Public housing (including State and Territory public housing, and State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing), Community housing, and Indigenous community housing.	Rental housing provided by not-for-profit, non-government or government organisations to assist low to moderate income people and families who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private rental market.
Austria	2015	Subsidized housing (limited profit housing) and municipal housing	Dwellings let by limited profit housing associations with funding from the housing subsidy programmes of the Provinces, and dwellings owned and let by municipalities (highly concentrated in Vienna)
Bulgaria	2015	Municipal and state housing	Municipalities use the limited public housing stock to provide rent at low cost.
Canada	2014	Social housing	Social housing is subsidized housing that is usually targeted to low- to moderate-income households who would otherwise be unable to afford suitable and adequate housing. It is typically owned by governments, non-profit groups or co-operatives.
Czech Republic	2015	No national definition of social rental housing	Social rental housing refers to apartments built through funding from the Government and whose use has been targeted at a particular social group. It excludes dwellings let by municipalities without specific eligibility criteria to select tenants
Denmark	2014	Common housing or not for profit housing (<i>Almene boliger</i>), that is dwellings owned by housing associations	Social housing is understood to refer to dwellings let by housing associations on a not for profit basis. Besides the large not for profit sector, there are also some 23 000 dwellings let by the municipalities.
Estonia	2015	Social housing	Provision of dwelling as a social service organised by a local authority, whose objective is to ensure housing for those who due to socio-economic situation are unable to provide a dwelling which corresponds to their needs
Finland	2015	social housing	Social rental housing whereby the selection of the residents is based on social appropriateness and financial need
France	2015	Social housing or moderate rent housing (<i>Habitation a loyer modéré</i> , or HLM)	A social dwelling is housing 1) covered by a contract with the State opening right to personal accommodation help, rented as the main residence, at a reduced rent; the maximum rate varies according to the type of funding (PLUS, PLAI, PLS) and the geographic area where it belongs; 2) for low or modest income households; 3) funded by state subsidies; 4) administered by a social landlord.
Germany	2014	Subsidized housing or social housing promotion	Subsidies are provided by the federal states in exchange for the use of a dwelling for social purposes (enforcing income ceilings and lower rents) for a period of 20 to 40 years, depending on the funding programme. All kind of providers are eligible for subsidies (municipalities, cooperatives, private landlords, commercial developers and investors with a variety of shareholders). Social rental housing is part of a wider system of 'social housing promotion' which includes increasingly also demand side support.

	Year	Definition	Summary overview
Hungary	2015	No national definition of social rental housing	Social rental housing mainly consists of municipal housing. Since 2014, it is also understood to include dwellings let within the National Asset Management Program (NAMP) to former owners who were no longer able to pay the mortgage
Ireland	2015	Social housing	Social rental housing includes local authority housing, as well as dwellings let under other schemes: Housing Assistance Payment (HAP, whereby the local authority pays the rent to private landlord), the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS, social housing support introduced to cater for the accommodation needs of persons who are in receipt of long-term rent supplement) and the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP, whereby approved housing bodies lease property from private owners to be let as social housing).
Japan	2015	Public housing	Public rental housing for low-income households, the elderly, the handicapped and households with children
Korea	2014	Public rental housing	Public Rental Housing refers to rental housing constructed 1) with funding from the state or local governments, or 2) with funding from the national housing fund according to the Article 60 of the Housing Law, or 3) on a housing site which is developed by public projects after obtaining approval according to the Article 16 of the Housing Law. It is mainly provided by the Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH), local governments and local public corporations, but the private sector is also involved.
Latvia	2015	Social houses and social apartments	Dwellings owned and rented out by municipalities at affordable rents to vulnerable households.
Lithuania	2015	Social housing rent	Provision of social rental housing by the municipalities
Luxemburg	2015	No official definition of social rental housing, but the law of 25th February 1979 regarding housing allowance refers specifically to dwellings belonging to public developers (<i>Fonds du Logement</i> and <i>Société Nationale des Habitations à Bon Marché</i> , as well as municipalities)	Rental dwellings owned by public developers, where rents are defined according to the composition of the household and its taxable income. Also dwellings rented through <i>Agences Immobilières Sociales</i> (i.e. associations acting as intermediaries between tenants and private landlords) are considered as social rental housing.
Malta	2015	Rental dwellings belonging to the government and the Church	More detailed information is not available.
Netherlands	2015	Dwellings with regulated rents (i.e. rent below EUR 710 per month) are considered as social housing	Social rental housing consists of dwellings rented by not for profit housing corporations at a rent below 710 euros per month. While up until recently access to social housing in the Netherlands was virtually open to all citizens, since 2011 providers must respect an income ceiling in the selection of tenants.
New Zealand	2015	Housing which belongs to Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) and community housing.	Premises receiving public subsidies, let by or on behalf of a registered community housing provider or by the public company Housing New Zealand Corporation, with income-based rents
Norway	2015	Social rental housing	Rental housing provided by municipalities

	Year	Definition	Summary overview
Poland	2015	No legal definition of social rental housing, but it can be understood as referring to municipal housing let according to social criteria and TBS housing	The term social housing is used to refer to: municipal housing, dwellings owned by housing associations and rented on a not for profit basis (TBS housing), housing owned by employers, and dwellings under cooperative tenancy. Out of all the above mentioned types of housing only two are allocated according to specific "social" criteria: social dwellings that are part of Municipal Housing Stock, and TBS housing.
Romania	2015	No current provision of social rental dwellings	The term social rental housing actually refers to rent subsidies to households from the municipalities
Slovak Republic	2015	Social housing	Social housing is housing acquired with the use of public funds, addressed for adequate and humanly decent housing of individuals who are not able to ensure housing with their own effort. Social housing is also permanent housing in residential buildings or accommodation financed from public funds and provided within the care under specific regulations.
Slovenia	2015	Non-profit housing	Supply of rental housing on a not for profit basis by a municipality, the state, a public housing fund or non-profit housing organisation
Spain	2016	Publicly protected housing (<i>Vivienda de proteccion publica</i> or VPO) is the general term for subsidized housing. It includes mainly subsidies for home ownership but also rent with an option to buy and public rental housing. Only the latter is to be considered as social rental housing.	Dwellings let at low rent, to low-to middle-income households. They are mainly provided by local authorities, public bodies and publicly owned companies, although funding is virtually open also to NGOs and not for profit companies. There are different schemes in place targeting different income levels, but the overall size of public rental housing is very small.
Switzerland	2015	No national definition of social rental housing, different definitions apply at the communal, cantonal and federal level	Non-profit housing is provided mainly by cooperatives, which are independent from the state but statutorily obliged to create affordable housing and to consider the needs of vulnerable people/groups. Municipalities also own and let a limited stock of dwellings to households in need.
United Kingdom	2015	Social rental housing/affordable rental housing	The term social housing refers to dwellings let by local authorities and housing associations (registered social landlords), provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Since local authorities stopped building homes in large numbers, non-profit making housing associations are mainly responsible for building new social housing. Since 2011, they are encouraged to build properties with affordable rent (up to 80% of market rents) and at fixed term tenancy, instead of the formerly typical social rents (usually half the market rate) with lifelong tenancies.
United States	2015	Public housing and supportive housing	Public housing is direct provision of rental housing by the states and local housing agencies with subsidies from federal government. Furthermore, the federal government provides subsidies to private entities (both for profit and non-profit) which own and manage supportive housing for elderly and disabled.

1. Information is missing for Belgium, Iceland, Israel, and Italy. There is no social rental housing in Cyprus, Greece, Mexico and Turkey. Sweden has no social housing either; however, there's a small sector usually referred to as "secondary housing market" in which the municipalities offer housing to (mainly) families in urgent need of a dwelling on a short term basis. In Croatia, existing subsidies programmes are mainly aimed at building low cost housing for home ownership; however, some rental dwellings are also provided by local governments and to a lesser extent not for profit organisations (no further information is available).

Source: OECD QuASH (2016, 2014)

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Setting the rent

The rent in social housing is set in different ways:

1. Cost-based: in 10 countries the rent in social rental housing is cost-based, so as to allow long-term recovery of the cost of building/acquiring the dwelling (Australia, in the case of community housing, Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Lithuania and the Slovak Republic).
2. Income-based: 6 countries apply income-based rents (Australia in the case of public housing, Ireland, Japan, Luxemburg, New Zealand and the United States), where the rent depends on the household income.
3. Utility-based: in Estonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom the rent level is defined by considering the dwellings characteristics (including size, amenities, location).
4. Fixed rent ceilings are also often applied on top of other criteria, as for instance in France, Korea, Spain, the Netherlands.

In the case of municipal housing and rent setting by the municipalities, practices vary significantly within countries and therefore no detailed information is available at national level in Norway, Slovenia and Latvia. Similarly, rent setting in social housing in Germany varies across Lander: in Nordrhein-Westfalen for instance a combination of utility- and income- based system is used, while in Schleswig-Holstein social rents are set based on the rent levels in the region.

The difference between actual rents paid in social housing and market rents can be significant, but many reporting countries found it difficult to estimate the gap. Typically in high demand locations such as big cities and capitals social rents are much lower than market rents, but the difference tends to be smaller in less attractive areas. Considering national averages, it is clear that the gap between social rents and market rents varies enormously across countries: while average social rents are between 80 and 90 % of market rents in Austria, Finland, Slovenia and Switzerland, they are as low as 15% of market rents in Estonia, about 30% in Lithuania, 40% in Luxemburg. Right-to-buy policies whereby sitting tenants can acquire the dwelling they live in at a discounted price currently exist in the following countries: in Australia in Indigenous community housing and in public housing in certain jurisdictions; in Austria under specified conditions (depending on the amount of the tenant contribution paid upon signing the lease contract); in England, Hungary, Luxemburg, and some Norwegian municipalities. While right-to-buy schemes proved to be very popular in the UK since their introduction in the early 1980s, the extend of sales under right to buy in Austria is relatively limited, and right-to-buy initiatives in Denmark did not cover large number of dwellings.

Further details on rents in social rental housing are provided in table 4.3.2 below.

Table 4.3.2: Rents in social rental housing¹

	Year	Rent setting system:			Rent increase system:		Social rent as percentage of market rent	Sitting tenant right to buy
		Cost-based	Income-based	Utility-based	Regularly increased	Not regularly increased		
Australia (2)	2015	In community housing and indigenous community housing	In public housing (25% to 30% of tenant income, up to market rent)		Depending on regulation at level of States and Territories		not available	In Indigenous community housing and in some jurisdictions in public housing
Austria	2015	Cost-based, with significant entry deposit			By consumer price index in Vienna; specific increasing payment schemes in other provinces		80%	Under distinct conditions, option to buy after 10-20 years
Czech Republic	2015	Cost-based				Not regularly increased	not available	No
Denmark	2014	Cost-based (about 3% of property acquisition price), with significant entry deposit			Increased or decreased according to running costs		not available	No
Estonia	2015			Based on the dwelling's features	not available	not available	About 15%	No
Finland	2015	Cost-based			Annually, depending on increase in utilities charges		Average 86% (about 73% in growth centres)	No
France (3)	2015	Cost-based, and below fixed rent ceilings which vary according to location			Annually, increase limited to the reference rent index		Average 64% (45% in Paris agglomeration)	No
Germany	2015	varies across Regional States	varies across Regional States	varies across Regional States	Yes		not available	No
Hungary (4)	2015	Cost-based in municipal housing				Not regularly increased	not available	Yes
Ireland (5)	2015		Income-based			Not regularly increased	not available	No

	Year	Rent setting system:			Rent increase system:		Social rent as percentage of market rent	Sitting tenant right to buy
		Cost-based	Income-based	Utility-based	Regularly increased	Not regularly increased		
Japan	2015		Income-based			Not regularly increased	not available	No
Korea (6)	2014	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	Yes, based on rent price index and changes in rents in nearby regions - up to 5% annual increase		It varies from 30% up to full market price	No
Latvia	2015	varies across municipalities	varies across municipalities	varies across municipalities	not available	not available	not available	no
Lithuania	2015	Cost-based				Not regularly increased	30%	No
Luxembourg (7)	2015		Income-based		Yes		About 40%	Yes
Netherlands (8)	2016			Calculated according to a point system based on the characteristics of the dwelling, up to a max EUR 710 per month	With inflation or higher, and the max increase is set by the government		not applicable (about 90% of the rental sector applies regulated rents)	There is no right to buy, it is up to the housing corporation whether to sell
New Zealand	2015		25% of tenant income			Not regularly increased, only if income increases	not available	No, but HNZC can put properties up for sale
Norway	2015	varies across municipalities	varies across municipalities	varies across municipalities	not available	not available	not available	Not in general, but there are right to buy schemes in several municipalities
Poland	2015			Set by the municipality taking into account characteristics of the dwelling and location		Yes, according to rules set for a five-year period	not available	Not in socially targeted dwellings, although it's possible in part of the municipal stock

	Year	Rent setting system:			Rent increase system:		Social rent as percentage of market rent	Sitting tenant right to buy
		Cost-based	Income-based	Utility-based	Regularly increased	Not regularly increased		
Slovakia	2015	Up to 5% of the acquisition cost of the dwelling				Not regularly increased	not available	No
Slovenia	2015	varies across municipalities	varies across municipalities	varies across municipalities		Not regularly increased	On average 86% (varies depending on location, in Ljubana social rent is about 1/3 of market rent)	No
Spain	2016			Below a max monthly rent per square meter fixed by law	not available	not available	not available	Only within specific programme
Switzerland	2015	Cost-based				Not regularly increased	80-90%	No
United Kingdom (9)	2015			Yes, see note for details	Yes, at rate fixed by the government		Roughly 60%, see note	For local authorities tenants, and some housing associations tenants
United States (10)	2015		Usually 30% of income			Rent may or may not increase each year, it varies locally	not available	No

1. Information is missing for Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Italy and Malta.

2. Australia: Information reported in the table refers to public housing. Different rules apply to Community housing and Indigenous Community Housing: in both cases eligibility is checked every 6 months and if the tenants no longer fulfill the eligibility criteria market rent is applied. Tenancy law/regulations are a matter for individual State and Territory governments, including the increase in rent.

3. France: Figures comparing social to market rents refer to 2010 (Ministry of the Environment, sustainable development, transports and housing, 2010).

4. Hungary: Information refers to municipal social housing. In the case of dwellings let under the National Asset Management Programme, the monthly rent is set at 1.5% of market price of the dwelling at the time of mortgage contract, divided by 12.

5. Ireland: There is currently no right-to-buy, but from 2016 a new tenant's purchase scheme will be implemented in local authorities' dwellings.

6. Korea: Rents are based on reference rents set by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. Public rental housing in some cases is provided through the special Korean rental system *Jeonse*, whereby the tenant pays a large deposit upfront but no monthly rent.

7. Luxembourg: Information refers to public rental housing. In the case of dwellings rented through *Agences Immobilières Sociales*, the rent is on average 70% of market rent, and tenants do not have a right to buy the dwelling.

8. Netherlands: While the maximum rent is EUR 710 euros per month, the average social rent is currently EUR 490 per month. No comparison is available with non-regulated rents, which represents a small share of the rental sector.

9. United Kingdom: Information refers to England. Social rent is based on a formula considering condition and location of a property, local earnings and property size. The definition of affordable rent is more flexible, up to 80% of market rent for an equivalent property

for that size and location. The average social housing rent as percentage of market rent is a result of calculations based on DCLG statistics (*Live tables on rents, lettings and tenancies, Private rental market statistics*).

10. United States: In most cases rents in public housing amount to 30% of the tenant household's income. Those with no income or very low incomes can usually pay a minimum rent determined locally, up to \$50 per month. Those with higher incomes sometimes pay a fixed amount (ceiling rent).

Source: OECD QuASH (2016, 2014).

Eligibility Criteria

All countries have criteria that determine who is eligible to live in social rental housing. In most cases these criteria determine which households are included in waiting lists to obtain a dwelling, to be then selected on the basis of different priority criteria. The combination of eligibility and priority criteria determines in practice which households obtain social tenancies (see tables 4.3.c and 4.3.d below).

Eligibility criteria are not necessarily very restrictive. In Denmark, for instance, registration on social housing waiting lists is open to anyone above the age of 15. There are nevertheless limits for costs of construction and size of the dwellings, which makes this type of dwellings particularly suitable for certain groups on low to middle income. In the United Kingdom on the other hand, only a few criteria for registration are defined, namely permanent residence and in some cases an established local connection. Nevertheless, allocation must give preference on the basis of needs to certain categories (the homeless, those in insanitary or overcrowded housing, people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, and other criteria to be determined locally), and although there is no income ceiling, allocations tend to correlate with low incomes.

The most common way to define eligibility to a social dwelling is the use of income-tests , usually benchmarked against either average incomes or minimum incomes/minimum wages. Assets are usually not included in means-testing (except in Finland and Korea) but in a majority of countries eligibility for social rental housing is conditional to not owning other housing properties. Income ceilings can be set at relatively high levels so as to allow income mixing (such as for instance in France and Austria).

Access criteria can also be defined according criteria of need (housing conditions at the time of the application: homelessness, unhealthy accommodation, overcrowding, risk of eviction, etc) and even criteria relating to specific characteristics in terms of health and/or age (youths, elderly or disabled persons), or specific population groups (e.g Roma communities in the Czech Republic or Indigenous populations in Australia or Canada).

Further details on criteria defining who is eligible to live in social rental housing are provided in table 4.3.3 below.

Table 4.3.3: Social rental housing eligibility criteria¹

Criteria assessed in selecting eligible households:						
	Year	All are eligible	Income threshold	Household composition/size	Housing situation	Other
Australia (2)	2015	No	Yes	No	Not owning a property	Ability to sustain a tenancy
Austria	2015	No	Yes	Yes	No	In some Provinces proof of income might be required
Canada	2015		Yes			

Criteria assessed in selecting eligible households:

	Year	All are eligible	Income threshold	Household composition/ size	Housing situation	Other
Czech Republic	2015	No	Yes	No	Yes	Social situation of the applicant for housing (Roma communities, people leaving institutional housing, prison, etc.), special arrangements for disabled and elderly
Denmark	2014	Yes	No	No	No	Some large dwellings are reserved for families
Estonia	2015	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
Finland	2015	No	Yes	No	Homelessness, pending eviction order, rescission of current lease agreement, inadequate size or condition of current home	Applicants must not have sufficient assets to purchase a similar apartment
France	2015	No	Thresholds vary across the different subsidy schemes	No	No	
Germany	2015	No	Yes	Yes		Criteria vary across Lander and different subsidy programmes
Hungary	2015	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Ireland	2015	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Japan	2015	No	Up to 25% of household income distribution, up to 40% for the elderly and household with children	Yes	Yes	
Korea	2014	No	Thresholds vary depending on the type of public rental housing	No	Not owning another dwelling	
Latvia	2015	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Lithuania	2015	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Luxemburg (3)	2015	No	No	No	No	

Criteria assessed in selecting eligible households:

	Year	All are eligible	Income threshold	Household composition/size	Housing situation	Other
Netherlands (4)	2015	No	Yes	No	No	
New Zealand	2015	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Poland	2015	No	Yes	No	Not holding legal title to another dwelling	Additional specific criteria set by the municipalities
Slovak Republic	2015	No	Up to 3 times the minimum living standard	No	No	
Slovenia	2015	Please select	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Spain	2016	No	Yes	No	No	Part of the stock is reserved for households receiving assistance from local social services
Switzerland	2015	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	Each cooperative has its own criteria. Some apply income limits and/or focus on the elderly or other vulnerable groups
United Kingdom (5)	2015	Yes	No			Application is open to all British citizen or a citizens who have the right to stay in the UK for an unlimited time
United States	2015	No	Up to 80% of local area median income.	No	No	40% of new admissions for each local agency must be for those below 30% of local area median income

1. Information is missing for Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Malta and Norway.

2. Australia: Information reported in the table refers to public housing. Indigenous Community Housing is only available to Indigenous households.

3. Luxembourg: Rules are slightly different for dwellings let through *Agences Immobilières Sociales*. In this case eligible households are those who: have an income below a certain threshold, suffer from unsuitable or precarious housing conditions, not own a dwelling, hold a regular residence permit, have health insurance.

4. Netherlands: social housing used to be virtually open to all. In 2011 reforms were introduced which limited eligibility to households with an income below a specific threshold.

5. United Kingdom: Information refers to England only. Recent reforms are gradually introducing means-testing in social housing. From 2017/18, those on incomes above £40,000 in London and £30,000 in the rest of England who live in social housing will be charged a market or near-market rent.

Source: OECD QuASH (2016, 2014).

Eligibility criteria are usually regularly re-assessed, but this is not the case in all countries. For instance there is no regular re-assessment in some countries with a large social rental sector such as

Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands. In Ireland re-assessment is not compulsory but it is nevertheless ‘recommended’ on an annual basis.

Table 4.3.4: Details on eligibility re-assessment¹

	Frequency of re-assessment	If sitting tenants no longer fulfill eligibility:		
		Rent increase	Lease termination	Other
Australia	Every 2, 5 or 10 years, depending on regulation at level of States and Territories			Depending on regulation at level of States and Territories, the lease might be terminated or another type of dwelling may be offered
Austria	No regular reassessment			
Czech Republic	Every 2 years		Yes	
Denmark	No regular reassessment			
Estonia	upon expiry of lease contract (duration from 6 months to 5 years)		Yes	
Finland	No regular reassessment			
France	Annually	Yes		A rent increase applies to households whose income increases above the income limits for social housing
Hungary	Annually	Yes		
Ireland	No regular reassessment			
Japan	Annually	Yes		
Korea	Every 2 years			It can result into rent increase up to market rent, or eviction if the household is found to be owning another dwelling
Latvia	Every 6 months	Yes		
Lithuania	Annually		Yes	
Luxemburg	Every 2 years	Yes		
Netherlands	No regular reassessment			
New Zealand	Every 3 years		Yes	
Poland	At the end of fixed-term contract		Yes	
Slovak Republic	every 3 years		Yes	
Slovenia	Usually every 5 years, but not mandatory	Yes		

1. Including only countries for which the information is available.

Source: OECD QuASH (2016, 2014).

Priority criteria

Once registration is completed, criteria of priority are often used to establish the order of allocation to different registered applicants. In most cases the time a household has been registered on a waiting list is one of the driving criteria. At the same time additional criteria usually aim at guaranteeing that persons with the greatest needs are served first. To this goal, in Austria and Denmark where allocation of social housing in the not for profit sector is not managed by the local authorities but by the housing providers instead, municipalities retain a right to allocate part of the social housing stock to households they select on the basis of needs assessment. Finally, criteria can also vary according to the local needs and gaps in local housing markets, and give priority for instance to certain type of key workers, or students and young people in areas with an ageing population.

Table 4.3.5: Social rental housing: criteria for priority allocation to eligible recipients¹

	Year	Time on waiting list	Income level	Housing situation	Household composition/ size	Other
Australia	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unstable or unsafe housing circumstances, risk factors (homelessness and at risk of homelessness, domestic or sexual violence, child abuse, threatening)
Austria	2015	Yes	No	No	No	In some Provinces, municipalities have an allotment right for certain share of limited profit housing units (priority defined by the municipality according to current housing conditions, income etc.)
Czech Republic	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Denmark	2014	Yes	No	Yes	No	The municipality can assign a homeless person/family a dwelling bypassing the waiting list; in some deprived areas people with jobs or students can bypass the waiting list with an aim to increase social mix
Estonia	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Health condition of the applicant and his/her family and other social aspects
Finland	2015	No	Yes	Yes	No	
France	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Homeless; people at risk of eviction; people with temporary accommodation; persons in unhealthy or unfit accommodation; households with children in overcrowded or indecent dwellings; disabled
Hungary	2015	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Recipients of social benefits
Ireland	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Homeless
Japan	2015	No	No	No	Yes	A limited number of dwellings are assigned through a lottery system
Korea	2014	Yes	No	No	No	
Latvia	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Lithuania	2015	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Large families, families who lost their home due to force majeure
Luxemburg	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Netherlands	2015	Yes	No	No	No	Priority can be given due to medical reasons; income is a criteria in the case of the lowest income households; a limited number of dwellings are assigned through a lottery system
New Zealand	2015	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Priority assessed according to five factors: affordability, adequacy, suitability, accessibility, sustainability
Poland	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Additional specific criteria set by the municipalities
Slovak Republic	2015					Criteria are set by the municipalities and they vary locally
Slovenia	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Spain	2015					Criteria for allocation vary locally, in some cases a lottery system is applied
Switzerland	2015	Yes	Yes	No	No	
United Kingdom	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Local authorities must give 'reasonable preference' to people who are homeless, living in insanitary or overcrowded housing, people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including relating disability), people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship. Additional criteria can be set at local level.
United States	2015					Criteria are set by local agencies and they vary locally

1. Information is missing for Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Malta and Norway.

Source: OECD QuASH (2016, 2014).

Sources and further reading:

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